UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1998/124
E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/2
17 February 1998

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-fourth session
Items 4 and 12 of the provisional agenda
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Fiftieth session
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING POLICIES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION AND OF APARTHEID, IN ALL COUNTRIES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES: REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION UNDER COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION 8 (XXIII)

Letter dated 14 January 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Acting Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights

Allow me to refer to a letter of 15 August 1997 submitted to you by the Permanent Observer of the PLO in Geneva and circulated, at his request, on 19 August 1997 as an official document of the Commission on Human Rights and also of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (E/CN.4/1998/8-E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/45). In that scurrilous letter, the PLO Observer accused the Israeli Ministry of Health of authorizing pharmaceutical companies "to experiment with dangerous drugs" on more than 4,000 Palestinians being held in detention facilities by Israel.

For several months now, we have been reluctant to dignify this outrageous and totally false allegation with a response. We had hoped, evidently naively, that Mr. Ramlawi would be persuaded to retract the gross anti-Semitic slur that he made during the fifty-third session of the Commission. However, it is now clear that, far from retracting, he is intent on compounding the insult by making further accusations in the same vein against the Israeli medical authorities. Moreover, it is unfortunately becoming apparent that Mr. Ramlawi's canards fit into a wider background of crude anti-Semitic (and not just anti-Israel) propaganda, currently being disseminated by certain Palestinian representatives in their unrelenting incitement against Israel - in patent violation of the Oslo Agreements (witness, for example, the support recently expressed by the Palestinian Writers' Association for Roger Garaudy, currently on trial in Paris on charges of denying the Holocaust).

To the substance of the present matter, the Israeli Minister of Health has issued an absolute and categoric denial of Mr. Ramlawi's allegations of experimentation with new and dangerous drugs on Palestinian detainees and prisoners. In addition, he has expressed outrage and indignation that the PLO Observer should have dared to suggest such an abhorrent idea. Let me quote from a statement issued on 23 September 1997 by the spokesman of the Ministry of Health:

> "Israel abides meticulously by all the regulations and instructions issued by relevant international organizations with regard to drug production. Minister of Health Joshua Matza maintains a close follow-up on the adherence to all the regulations and he personally expresses his exasperation and anger at the dissemination of groundless defamations."

Contrary to Mr. Ramlawi's mendacious claims, so-called "information" on the subject has never been "revealed" in parliamentary committees in the Knesset, nor has it been "reaffirmed" by officials of the Ministry of Health. Mr. Ramlawi's letter is, in fact, no more than a transparent concoction of falsehoods, inspired - like others he has penned - by the infamous doctrine of the "big lie".

With regret, I have to request that this letter be distributed as an official document of the Commission, under items 4 and 12 on the provisional agenda for its fifty-fourth session, and of the Sub-Commission, under item 2 on its provisional agenda for its fiftieth session.

(Signed) Yosef LAMDAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative